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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/981,766	10/19/2001	Yasumasa Takao	215217US0	6675

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EXAMINER

UHLIR, NIKOLAS J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1773

DATE MAILED: 05/09/2002

4

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

AS-4

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/981,766

Applicant(s)

TAKAO ET AL.

Examiner

Nikolas J. Uhler

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 6 and 8-9 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 and 7 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 5 and 7 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-5 and 7, drawn to an aluminum nitride powder, classified in class 428, subclass 402.
 - II. Claim 6 drawn to a method for manufacturing an aluminum nitride powder, classified in class 148, subclass 513.
 - III. Claims 8 and 9, drawn to an apparatus for making an aluminum nitride powder, classified in class 266, subclass 202.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

2. Inventions I and II are related as process of making and product made. The inventions are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the process as claimed can be used to make other and materially different product or (2) that the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process (MPEP § 806.05(f)). In the instant case the product can be made via another and materially different process, such as heating a filler powder into a vaporized state, and nitriding the vapor in a nitrogen containing atmosphere.
3. Inventions III and I are related as apparatus and product made. The inventions in this relationship are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the apparatus as claimed is not an obvious apparatus for making the product and the apparatus can be used for making a different product or (2) that the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different apparatus (MPEP § 806.05(g)). In this

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case the apparatus is not an obvious apparatus for making the product, and the apparatus can be used to make another and materially different product, such as a boron nitride.

4. Inventions II and III are related as process and apparatus for its practice. The inventions are distinct if it can be shown that either: (1) the process as claimed can be practiced by another materially different apparatus or by hand, or (2) the apparatus as claimed can be used to practice another and materially different process. (MPEP § 806.05(e)). In this case the apparatus can be used to practice another and materially different process, such as the manufacture of a boron nitride powder comprising the elements B and N.

5. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

6. During a telephone conversation with Tom Barnes on 4/29/02 a provisional election was made with traverse to prosecute the invention of the product, claims 1-5 and 7. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims 6, 8, and 9 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Priority

7. Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Claim Objections

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8. Claim 5 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim should refer to other claims in the alternative. See MPEP § 608.01(n). Accordingly, the claim 5 has not been further treated on the merits.

9. Claim 7 objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim cannot depend from any other multiple dependent claim. See MPEP § 608.01(n). Accordingly, the claim 7 has not been further treated on the merits.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

10. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

11. Claims 3, 4 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claims 3 and 4 recite the limitation "the raw material" in the first two lines of each claim. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Further, claim 3 recites the term "perfect combustion ratio." The term "perfect combustion ratio" is not defined by the claim, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention. Last, in claims 3 and 4, the applicant requires that the raw material consist of a powder of aluminum, or a mixture comprising a powder of Aluminum and Oxygen and a powder of Carbon, with each powder having a specific particle size. Claim 1, upon which claims 3 and 4 are dependent, requires that the aluminum nitride filler powder consist of **either** the elements Al, O, and N, **or** only Al and N. It is unclear to the examiner which type of

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Aluminum Nitride filler powder requires which type of raw-material powder. This element is neither specified by the claims nor the specification, and thus one with ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention. Correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

12. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

13. Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Parent (US5190738).

14. The limitations "flame synthesized," and "manufactured in a vapor phase in the presence of a flame" in claim 1, and claims 2-5 contain process limitations that do not appear to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art structure, regardless of how the prior art structure is manufactured. "[E]ven though product-by-process claims are limited by and defined by the process, determination of patentability is based on the product itself. The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. If the product in the product-by-process claim is the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product was made by a different process." *In re Thorpe*, 777 F.2d 695, 698, 227 USPQ 964, 966 (Fed. Cir. 1985). See MPEP § 2113.

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15. Parent teaches a process for producing un-agglomerated single crystals of Aluminum Nitride (AlN) having low oxygen content, wherein the AlN has a large particle size and is suitable for reinforcing metal, ceramic, and polymeric matrices (column 2, lines 10-20). These AlN crystals are typically between 10-100 μ m in diameter, and are spherical in shape (column 2, lines 43-65). The AlN is formed via a carbothermal reaction utilizing alumina, carbon (column 4, lines 41-50) and an alkali metal oxide (column 2, lines 52-55). All of the solid ingredients are typically in powder form and have an average particle size of ~100 μ m (column 7, lines 13-17). Parent discusses the use of this AlN material for reinforcing ceramic, polymeric, and metal matrices to provide thermal conductivity to articles formed from these mixtures (column 7, lines 48-58). Thus, the product of Parent appears to be identical to that of the claimed invention.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Nikolas J. Uhler whose telephone number is 703-305-0179. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 7:30 am - 5 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul Thibodeau can be reached on 703-308-2367. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9310 for regular communications and 703-872-9311 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-305-0389.

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May 1, 2002

Paul Thibodeau

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Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 1700